

School Turnaround Models

Emerging Turnaround Strategies and Results

June 2010

This report represents an extension of Mass Insight's research on school turnaround. It focuses on emerging examples of effective school turnaround from the field, both at the district and partner levels. The following summaries explain core components of each turnaround initiative and point to early indicators of success.

Turnaround is a relatively new field that emphasizes dramatic and comprehensive interventions for chronically low-performing schools. This report highlights promising turnaround models from the field. These examples represent diverse approaches; however, they share an alignment with Mass Insight's principles for effective school turnaround. These models serve as a resource for those entering the field and should inform policy in this area. As the field continues to deepen, we will learn more about promising turnaround efforts and their impact on student achievement.

Mass Insight continues to lead research and development efforts in the turnaround sector. Our education reform strategies are defined by two convictions: that change at scale depends on the practical integration of research, policy, and practice; and that only dramatic and comprehensive change in high-poverty schools will produce significant achievement gains. In line with these beliefs, we focus our work on a number of core activities, including the development of cutting edge, research-based toolkits, communication of both our principles and strategies to key stakeholders, and support for states and districts in designing and implementing dramatic reform strategies.

The culmination of our research is the launch of the Partnership Zone Initiative, a national effort to implement proof points of our Partnership Zone framework in six states over the next several years. This work is funded by an initial grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, with a partial match from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

- Introduction and summary of school turnaround models
- Turnaround models: Districts
- Turnaround models: Partnerships

Introduction: About this research

- The purpose of this research is to highlight **promising school turnaround models**, both implemented by school districts and partnership organizations. This analysis summarizes the following models:

Urban Districts

- 1) Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC
- 2) New Orleans RSD, LA
- 3) Chicago, IL
- 4) New York City, NY
- 5) Baltimore, MD
- 6) Los Angeles, CA

Partnerships

- 1) AUSL
- 2) Green Dot
- 3) Mastery Schools
- 4) Friends of Bedford, Inc.

- The following **profiles** describe (1) how these initiatives are structured, (2) who is involved, and (3) what strategies are used to affect school-wide improvement.
- School turnaround is a **dramatic and comprehensive intervention** in low-performing schools that:
 - a) produces significant gains in achievement within two years; and
 - b) readies the school for the longer process of transformation into a high-performance organization.

A timeline of school turnaround policy and practice

Turnaround is a relatively new approach to education reform; therefore, many of the models profiled in this report are just now beginning to collect efficacy data. It is important to consider the context of school turnaround as an emerging field.

In Policy...

2002- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires schools to demonstrate adequate yearly progress (AYP) and creates tiered sanctions

2007- Mass Insight releases *The Turnaround Challenge*, which Sec. of Education Arne Duncan recently hailed as the “bible” of school turnaround

2009- The USDOE announces \$3.5B in **School Improvement Grants** (SIG) to turn around the nation’s lowest performing schools

2004

2007

2010

...and in Practice.

2004- Chicago Public Schools opens the Office of School Turnaround and launches Renaissance 2010 to fix failing schools

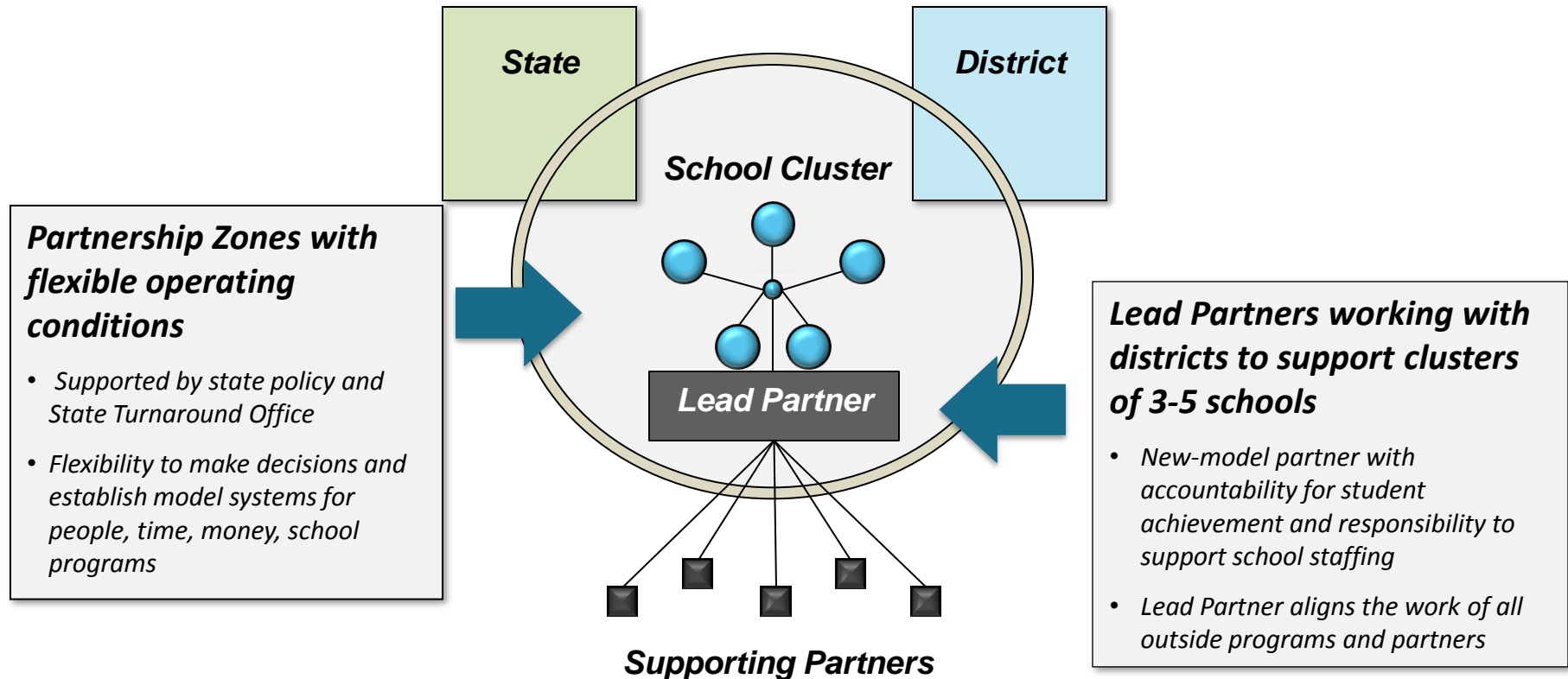
2005- AUSL and Mastery Schools enter the turnaround space and contract with school districts to turn around underperforming schools

2006- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools launches the Achievement Zone, which creates a turnaround zone within the school district

2010- The School Turnaround Group launches the **Partnership Zone Initiative** to provide proof points for *The Turnaround Challenge*

Many turnaround models align with the Partnership Zone structure




Many of the turnaround models outlined in this report share the same principles as Mass Insight's framework for Partnership Zones.



- Introduction and summary of school turnaround models
- Turnaround models: Districts
- Turnaround models: Partnerships

Three factors for successful turnaround are conditions, capacity, and clustering

The School Turnaround Group has identified three factors for successful school turnaround. The 3 C's include: conditions, capacity, and clustering.

<i>What's needed to enable schools and districts to address the challenges of chronically underperforming schools?</i>		
<u>Conditions</u>	Change the rules and incentives governing people, time, money, & program	 ZONES
<u>Capacity</u>	Build turnaround resources and human capacity in schools within the zone through Lead Partners and sufficient funding	 PARTNERSHIPS
<u>Clustering</u>	To get to scale, organize clusters of schools within the zone intentionally and systematically	 CLUSTERS OF SCHOOLS

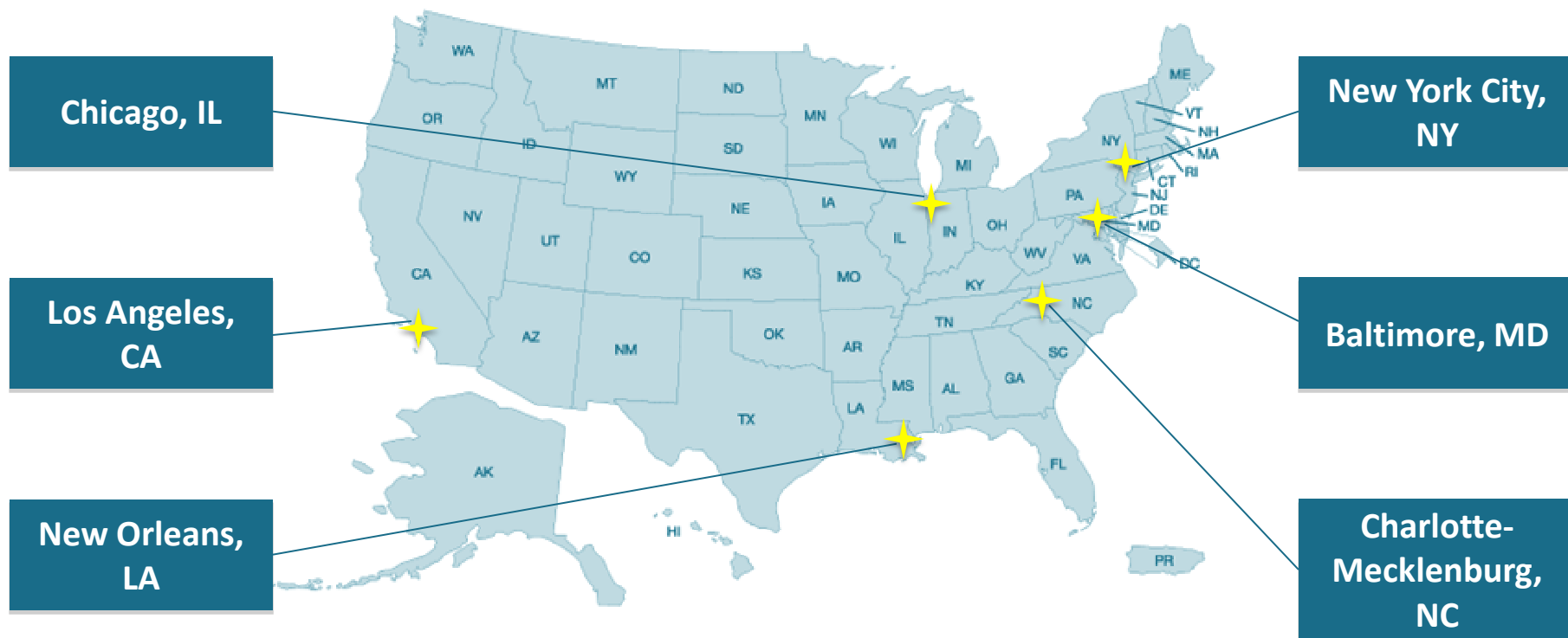
Summary: Lessons learned and promising practices

The models in this report inform promising practices for successful school turnaround, which align with the School Turnaround Group's turnaround principles in the areas of capacity, conditions, and clustering.

KEY STRATEGIES		
Capacity	Conditions	Clustering
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emphasis on human capital• Employment of a Lead Partner• Ongoing professional development opportunities• Strong school leadership, specific to turnaround• Use of additional partners and collaborators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased autonomy and flexibility for schools• Additional resources and funding• Emphasis on quality curricula, instruction, and use of assessment data• Streamlined compliance burden/increased regulatory freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adoption of a zone-like structure for a subset of schools• Identification of and focus on low-performing schools• Leveraging scale benefits across schools• Increased affiliation and collaboration across a subset of schools

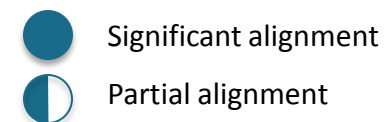
School turnaround models: Districts



















Several school districts have transformed and significantly improved educational outcomes through turnaround initiatives.



District models: Comparison and alignment

The following chart compares each of the district models and demonstrates their alignment with the School Turnaround Group's principles for effective turnaround.



Models	Capacity	Conditions	Clustering
Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC Achievement Zone			
New Orleans, LA Recovery School District			
Chicago, IL Renaissance 2010			
New York, NY Chancellor's District			
Baltimore, MD Innovation Schools			
Los Angeles, CA iDesign Schools			

** This representation do not necessarily signify the effectiveness of the model; rather, it demonstrate alignment with the strategies and conditions espoused by the School Turnaround Group.*

District models: Achievement Zone, Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC

Background & Strategies

- In 2006, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) **identified that one-third of the district's 165 schools were performing far below other schools**. That year, the district established the Achievement Zone to target its lowest-performing schools.
- The Zone represents a non-geographically determined cluster of 11 schools that are selected by the state or are in need of corrective action under NCLB guidelines. District and zone superintendents then make decisions about transitioning schools in and out of the Zone. **The objective is to improve schools and then transfer them out of the Zone.**
- A separate administrative team manages and supports Zone schools.
- **These schools receive additional resources** in the areas of curriculum and instruction, professional development, discipline, communications and partnerships, human resources, transportation, and maintenance.
- In 2008-09, CMS launched the Strategic Staffing Initiative (SSI). SSI targets a separate subset of schools with interventions specifically pertaining to staffing.
 - CMS identifies a strong principal to lead the efforts in these underperforming schools.
 - The principal then works with a team identify top staff in the district. They recruit those teachers to work in the district's most struggling school by offering financial and professional incentives.

Results

- Since its inception three years ago, all Achievement Zone schools have experienced gains on both reading and math assessments.
- **91% of Zone middle schools met AYP in 2008-09**, up from 61% in 2007-08.
- In 2008-09, 68% of student at West Charlotte High School were on grade level, up from 40% in 2005-06. During that same timeframe, West Mecklenburg HS saw an increase of 25%, and E.E. Waddell experienced an increase of 11%.
- CMS is a finalist for the 2010 Broad Prize.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ **Capacity:** Emphasis on human capital; use of partners; ongoing PD; strong leadership
- ✓ **Conditions:** Increased autonomy; additional resources; emphasis on curricula, instruction, and assessment
- ✓ **Clustering:** Adoption of a zone-like structure; identification of low-performing schools; increased collaboration

District models: Recovery School District, New Orleans, LA

Background & Strategies

- The Recovery Schools District (RSD) was launched in 2003 as a special, **statewide district run by the Louisiana Department of Education**. The RSD marks an effort to turn around and rebuild underperforming schools in New Orleans, a problem exacerbated by Hurricane Katrina.
- Schools failing to meet state standards for four consecutive years become eligible for state intervention in the RSD.
- The local school district enters into a memorandum of understanding with the state, which outlines how the local entity must implement reforms in order to avoid placement in the RSD.
- **112 schools have been in the RSD; this includes both traditional public and charter schools. Schools remain in the RSD for a minimum of five years.**
- School improvement strategies include: (1) extended school day to allow for more instructional time, (2) rigorous curriculum aligned with grade-level standards, (3) classroom modernization program with technology improvements, (4) **strong leadership by State and RSD superintendents**, (5) **greater flexibility for principals**, (6) **partnerships with external organizations**, such as TFA and TNTP, (7) five-block high school schedule, (8) dual-enrollment opportunities for upperclassmen.

Results

- **For three consecutive years, RSD students showed greater gains on state standardized tests than students statewide.** Most recently, in 2009-10, RSD scores increased by 6%, versus 1% statewide.
- The passing rate for first-time 4th grade test-takers on the LEAP exam increased from 36% in 2007 to 58% in 2009.
- The passing rate for first-time 8th grade test-takers on the LEAP exam increased from 32% in 2007 to 50% in 2009.
- Total instructional time in 2008-2009 equaled 76,170 minutes (8 AM – 4:30 PM daily) versus the state requirement of 63,720 minutes.
- Student enrollment surged after experiencing a marked decline post-Katrina.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ **Capacity:** Use of partners; strong school leadership
- ✓ **Conditions:** Increased autonomy; additional resources; emphasis on curricula, instruction, and assessment
- ✓ **Clustering:** Identification of low-performing schools; increased collaboration

District models: Renaissance 2010, Chicago, IL

Background & Strategies

- In 2004, Chicago Public Schools (CPS) launched a two-part reform initiative known as Renaissance 2010. **CPS committed to (1) opening 100 new charter schools and (2) improving the city's worst-performing schools through a turnaround strategy.**
- First, the Office of New Schools requests proposals for new charter schools. This process focuses on the school model, curriculum, and hiring.
- Second, the Office of School Turnaround works with existing, troubled schools. They select a new principal, hire new staff, develop programs, engage partners, and create opportunities for professional development and parent engagement.
- Turnaround schools follow a phased approach in their redesign. During this process, the **school receives additional resources, staff members, and external support.**
- CPS launched the Office of School Turnaround in 2008. They identified their first turnaround high school in 2008. Currently, the district has six turnaround schools.
- The overall reform strategy is governed by several principles: (1) a core curriculum, (2) extended learning time, (3) after-school tutoring, (4) professional development, (5) staff incentives, and (6) community outreach.

Results

- CPS notes **early improvements in the areas of discipline, school safety, and the school environment.** The first phase of the improvement effort targets school climate, family engagement, and school stabilization, as opposed to academic gains.
- In their first year, turnaround schools see fewer instances of serious misconduct, and attendance and PSAT scores increase. The rate of students on-track to graduate grows incrementally.
- The department acknowledges that turnaround takes five to six years.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ **Capacity:** Emphasis on human capital; use of partners; ongoing PD; strong leadership
- ✓ **Conditions:** Increased autonomy; additional resources; emphasis on curricula, instruction, and assessment
- ✓ **Clustering:** Adoption of a zone-like structure; identification of low-performing schools; increased collaboration

District models: Chancellor's District, New York, NY (1996-2003)

Background & Strategies

- In 1996, New York City Department of Education Chancellor Rudolph Crew created a citywide improvement zone known as the Chancellor's District. This **non-geographically determined zone was created to accelerate improvement in the city's lowest-performing schools.**
- At the time, City schools were managed by local community school districts. By contrast, **schools in the Chancellor's District would become centrally managed.**
- The seven-year initiative marked an unprecedented intervention. In total, the zone removed 58 elementary and middle schools from local district control. Several of these schools were eventually closed; however, most improved and were returned to their local district.
- Under new leadership, these schools then received concentrated interventions. Centralized management allowed the schools to initiate changes to school policies and procedures.
- **Chancellor's District schools implemented the Model for Excellence.** Class sizes were reduced, instructional time increased, and the school calendar was lengthened. District schools implemented after-school programs and followed a prescribed curriculum and instructional program. The transformation also focused on building internal capacity through intensive professional development and on-site staff developers. Ineffective teachers were removed from the District.

Results

- The Chancellor's District was established to increase academic outcomes and instructional capacity in failing schools.
- A study by New York University's Institute for Education and Social Policy found that **District schools saw more significant improvements than other struggling schools citywide.**
- The percentage of 4th grade students meeting statewide reading standards increased by approximately 18% in District schools.
- The initiative ended in 2003 when the school district underwent system-wide restructuring.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ **Capacity:** Emphasis on human capital; use of partners; ongoing PD; strong leadership
- ✓ **Conditions:** Additional resources; emphasis on curricula, instruction, and assessment
- ✓ **Clustering:** Adoption of a zone-like structure; identification of low-performing schools; increased collaboration

District models: Innovation Schools, Baltimore, MD

Background & Strategies

- In 2001, Baltimore City Public School Systems (BCPSS) announced a **five-year initiative to reform the city's high schools**.
- **This included plans to open eight innovation high schools and to create neighborhood schools by converting all of the city's large high schools into small learning communities with increased autonomy.**
- These schools were to embody three central principles: (1) strong academic rigor, (2) small supportive structures, and (3) effective, accountable instruction and leadership.
- **Innovation schools were launched by or with external partners. They received significant autonomy in terms of staffing, selecting and implementing curriculum, and allocating resources.** Whereas neighborhood schools are filled based on geographic boundaries, innovation schools are filled based on student interest.
- Most recently, BCPSS announced plans to open transformation schools. They began with an RFP process in 2009-10 to identify potential school management organizations. The district plans to open 24 schools by 2011-12. Transformation schools will be small schools serving grades 6 to 12.

Results

- **Students in innovation high schools scored between 14 and 30 points higher on HSA algebra and English tests.**
- Innovations schools' attendance rates were up to 22% higher than the citywide average.
- Students in innovation and neighborhood schools were more likely stay enrolled in their initial high school than students at other city schools.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ **Capacity:** Emphasis on human capital; use of partners; ongoing PD; strong leadership
- ✓ **Conditions:** Increased autonomy; additional resources; emphasis on curricula, instruction, and assessment
- ✓ **Clustering:** Identification of low-performing schools

District models: iDesign Schools, Los Angeles, CA

Background & Strategies

- LAUSD launched the Public School Choice Initiative in 2009. The district is exploring new school models to enhance educational opportunities, including charter, iDesign (partner-managed), and magnet schools.
- The **iDesign Schools, Innovation, and Charter Schools Division at LAUSD selects, screens, and approves network partners to work with the district's schools.**
- **iDesign schools have increased decision-making authority** over the curriculum, instructional strategies, professional development, hiring, schools budgets, scheduling, and school programs. The change strategy hinges upon decentralized, school-based decisions.
- **Network partners sign a five-year contract with LAUSD, which confers autonomy and accountability.** The district currently works with four partners that work with a total of 19 schools.
- The district hopes that successful strategies from the iDesign schools will eventually inform district-wide practices.
- Charter school operators, nonprofit organizations, and teacher unions were encouraged to submit bids to operate up to 36 schools in a plan that allows outsiders to manage public schools. The first cohort of schools includes 24 new schools and 12 turnaround schools.

Results

- LAUSD has a robust performance management system for its iDesign schools, which includes: (1) defining excellence, (2) tracking progress and creating transparency, (3) making informed decisions, and (4) establishing recognition and consequences.
- **Two schools managed by Mentor Los Angeles (MLA) have posted significant gains in graduations rates and on the state's Academic Performance Index.** West Adams Prep's average API score increased by 31 points in 2009, and Manual Arts HS's score increased by 22 points.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ **Capacity:** Emphasis on human capital; use of partners; ongoing PD
- ✓ **Conditions:** Increased autonomy; additional resources; emphasis on curricula, instruction, and assessment
- ✓ **Clustering:** Identification of low-performing schools

Initiatives to watch...

Given the recent and unprecedented level of support and funding for school turnaround efforts, several states and districts have just recently started to develop turnaround initiatives...

- ...In **Detroit, MI**, the Greater Detroit Venture Fund was established to incentivize school improvement. The Fund will provide resources to support high school turnaround, which will be facilitated by partnerships with education intermediaries. The effort will target schools with consistently low graduation rates.
- ...In **Kentucky**, the Department of Education recently launched a statewide initiative to turn around 10 schools. The identified schools have failed to make adequate yearly progress for three consecutive years, during which time their graduation rates were also less than 60%.
- ...In **Washington, D.C.**, Chancellor Michelle Rhee has contracted with outside partners to turn around some of the city's poorest-performing schools. Most recently, the city's revised teachers' contract includes plans for new school turnaround models.
- ...In **Mississippi**, Mississippi State University launched the Turnaround Leadership Academy. This program, modeled after a similar program at the University of Virginia, will train educators for successful turnaround.
- ...In **Illinois, Delaware, Colorado, Massachusetts, New York, and Louisiana**, states will collaborate with local Lead Partners as part of Mass Insight's Partnership Zone Initiative. These states will serve as proof points for successful school turnaround.

- Introduction and summary of school turnaround models
- Turnaround models: Districts
- Turnaround models: Partnerships

Partnership models: Alignment with the role of the Lead Partner

In many ways, the following partnership models mirror the role of the Lead Partner in Mass Insight's Partnership Zone Initiative. Lead Partners are nonprofit organizations or units of central offices on contract with the central office or states for small clusters of 3-5 schools.

Responsibilities of the a Lead Partners

- **Sign a 3-5 year performance contract for student achievement** with the district or state; the agreement assigns the Lead Partner responsibility for a small “intentional” cluster of schools¹ where systems and programs will be aligned and holds the Lead Partner accountable for improving the student achievement
- **Assume authority for decision making on school staffing** (as well as time, money and program); in particular, the Lead Partner:
 - Hires a new principal or approves the current one
 - Supports the principal in hiring and replacing teachers and has responsibility for bringing in a meaningful cohort of new instructional staff
- **Provide core academic and student support services** directly or align the services of other program and support partners, who are on sub-contracts with the Lead Partner, and build internal capacity within the schools and by extension, the district
- Has an **embedded, consistent and intense relationship with each school** during the turnaround period (5 days per week)

Summary: Lessons learned and promising practices

The following models inform promising practices for successful school turnaround with a partnership organization. These examples align with Mass Insight's Lead Partner framework, which details the roles and responsibilities for a partnership strategy.

KEY STRATEGIES

Accountability for student achievement

- Contract between Lead Partner and LEA/SEA
- Lead Partner accountability for student performance

Authority over key levers

- Modified collective bargaining agreement
- Ability to hire principal
- Budget authority
- Program authority
- Time authority

Provider/ coordinator of all services

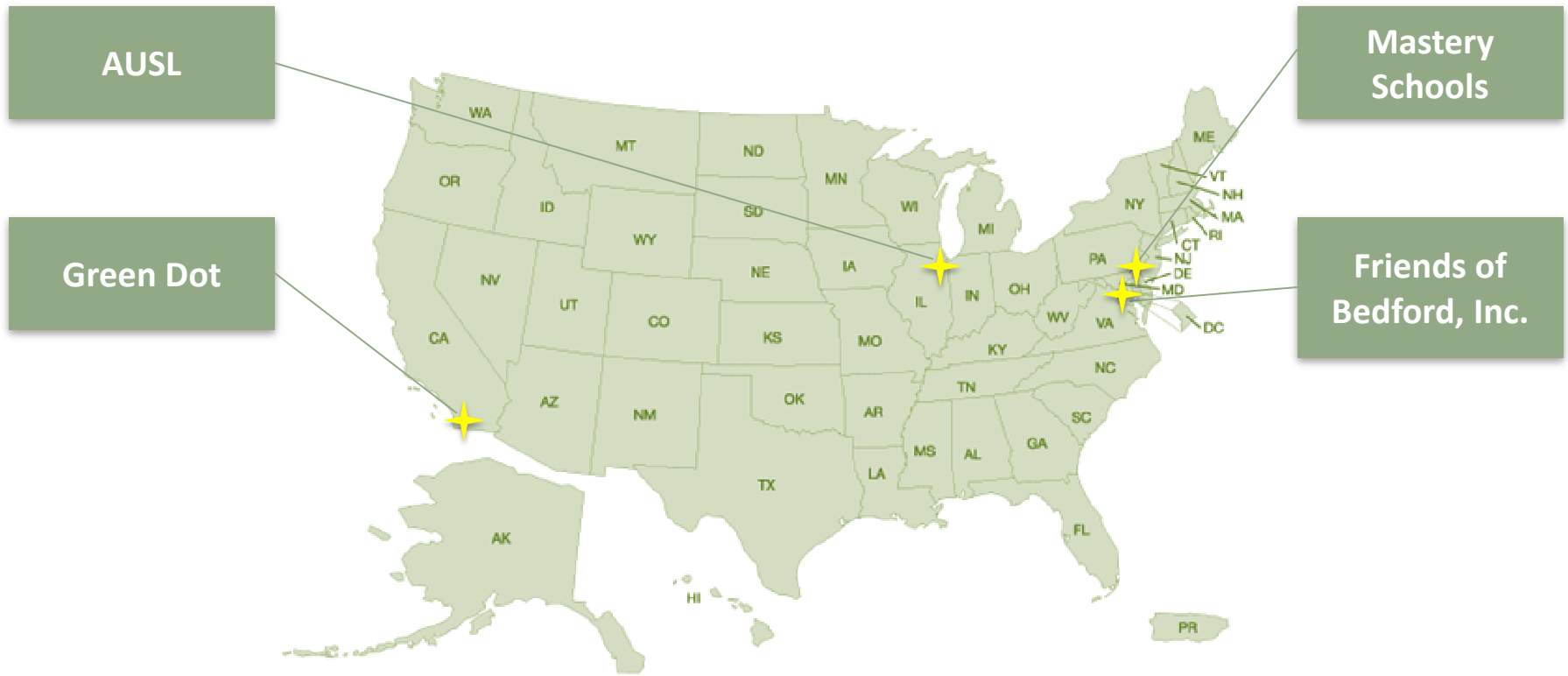
- Provision of all core services
- Management of supporting partners

Embedded, consistent relationship

- Presence in schools five days a week

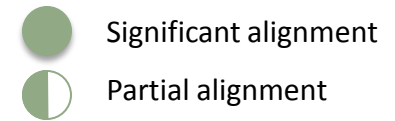
School turnaround models: Partnerships

Several local education agencies and charter management organizations have partnered with school districts to transform and significantly improve educational outcomes through turnaround initiatives.



Partnership models: Comparison and alignment

The following chart compares each of the lead partnership models and demonstrates their alignment with the School Turnaround Group's structure for partnerships, which emphasizes authority and accountability.



Models	Accountability for student achievement	Authority over key levers	Provider/ coordinator of all services	Embedded, consistent relationship
AUSL				
Green Dot				
Mastery Schools				
Friends of Bedford, Inc.				

** This representation do not necessarily signify the effectiveness of the model; rather, it demonstrate alignment with the strategies and conditions espoused by the School Turnaround Group.*

Partnership models: Academy for Urban School Leadership

Background & Strategies

- AUSL was founded in 2001 as an education reform nonprofit specializing in school management and teacher preparation.
- Since 2005, AUSL has also worked closely with Chicago Public Schools to turn around low-performing schools.
- AUSL's first turnaround school was in 2006, followed by a second in 2007, three more in 2008, three more in 2009, and four more in 2010.
- **AUSL currently works with 18 schools**, and six of those schools also serve as AUSL teacher training academies.
- The AUSL **turnaround model includes: (1) replacing the principal, (2) replacing up to 50% of the staff (with many from AUSL's training program), (3) revamping the curriculum, and (4) renewing school culture.**
- AUSL's turnaround framework is summarized by the acronym PASSAGE: Positive school culture, Action against adversity, Setting goals and getting it done, Shared responsibility for achievement, Guaranteed and viable curriculum, and Engaging and personalized instruction.
- **AUSL operates within the context of district compliance and has a unionized staff.**

Results

- Four AUSL schools –Morton, Howe, Johnson, and Bethune– are among the **top 5% of the fastest-improving schools in Chicago.**
- Howe School of Excellence has **increased the number of students meeting or exceeding ISAT standards by 24% during just two years of turnaround.**
- AUSL schools have increased the number of students meeting or exceeding ISAT standards pre- and post-turnaround by an **average of 20 percent.**
- Dodge Renaissance Academy has **quadrupled the percent of students meeting or exceeding ISAT standards in seven years (22% to 82%).**
- AUSL's teacher retention rate is over 87%, compared to the national average of 50% for new teachers.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ Accountability for student achievement
- ✓ Authority over key levers: Somewhat constrained by district and teacher union compliance
- ✓ Provider/coordinator of all services
- ✓ Embedded, consistent relationship

Partnership models: Green Dot

Background & Strategies

- Green Dot Public Schools is a charter management organization that has opened 19 charter schools in the Los Angeles area.
- In addition to opening charter schools, Green Dot has begun to support public school turnaround. **In 2007, staff at Locke High School voted to transfer school governance from LAUSD to Green Dot.**
- **Green Dot describes successful turnaround as having a phase-in-by-grade model, an alternative governance structure that features autonomy and flexibility from district policies, and a performance-based accountability system.**
- The Locke Transformation Project represents a major restructuring. The school was divided into eight small learning communities, and teachers began to emphasize personalized instruction and high expectations. All students enroll in a college preparatory curriculum. All schools operate according to the organization's six tenants of high-performing schools: (1) small, safe, personalized schools, (2) high expectations for all students, (3) local control with extensive professional development and accountability, (4) parent participation, (5) maximize school funding to the classroom, and (6) keep schools open later.
- **Green Dot has full human resources autonomy**, meaning that they have authority over staffing. However, **Green Dot's teachers have organized as an independent union. Green Dot has created mutual trust with the union; teachers receive above-average pay but cannot earn tenure, and they are expected to work a professional day (not defined by minutes).**

Results

- In 2006, prior to Green Dot's intervention, only 5% of Locke's students attended four-year colleges.
- In 2007, only 28% of entering freshman graduated within four years. That same year, only 10.5% of schools achieved proficiency in English, and 1.6% in math.
- Within one year, Green Dot affected major change at Locke. By spring 2009, **the school had retained about 500 more students than the previous year and had tested 38% more students.**
- **Attendance increased by over 10%.** Students and parents report feeling safer and more supported.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ Accountability for student achievement
- ✓ Authority over key levers
- ✓ Provider/coordinator of all services
- ✓ Embedded, consistent relationship

Partnership models: Mastery Schools

Background & Strategies

- Mastery Schools is a charter management organization that works with middle and high schools, using the motto “Excellence. No excuses.” The organization moved into the turnaround space in 2005.
- Mastery currently operates four schools in Philadelphia. These schools enroll 2,100 students in grades 7 to 12. **Three of the four schools are classified as turnaround schools as opposed to charter schools. These three schools represent a partnership with the Philadelphia School District to improve several of the district’s lowest-performing schools.**
- The turnaround approach integrates solid management and effective educational strategies. Successful turnaround requires high expectations and high levels of support.
- Mastery emphasizes quality teaching; this includes: outstanding instruction, ongoing professional development, collaboration, coaching, and feedback. **Mastery does not abide by a union contract.**
- Mastery schools use a common teaching model and standards-based curricula. These stress the importance of assessments and using data to improve instruction. All students are expected to graduate having successfully completed the schools’ college-preparatory program.

Results

- Under Mastery’s turnaround leadership, **subject-area test scores have increased an average of 52% in every grade.**
- On the Thomas Campus, 56% of 11th grade students scored “proficient/advanced” on the reading PSSA in 2009, up from 33% in 2005; 58% scored “proficient/advanced” on the math PSSA in 2009, up from 37% in 2005.
- On the Shoemaker Campus, 84% of 8th grade students scored “proficient/advanced” on the PSSA in 2009, compared to 43% in 2006.
- All turnaround schools have closed the achievement gap in 8th grade math, and two have closed the gap in reading.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ Accountability for student achievement
- ✓ Authority over key levers
- ✓ Provider/coordinator of all services
- ✓ Embedded, consistent relationship

Partnership models: Friends of Bedford

Background & Strategies

- Friends of Bedford, Inc. is an education consulting firm that is committed to innovative instructional models; they are guided by the motto: “Academic empowerment is the birthright of every child.”
- The organization is perhaps best known for its work at Bedford Academy High School, a public school in Brooklyn, New York. The school recently ranked as one of the best in New York State.
- D.C. Public Schools (DCPS) recently entered into a partnership with the organization based on its track record of turning around chronically underperforming schools in a short period of time.
- The organization is currently contracted by DCPS to turn around two schools: Calvin Coolidge High School and Paul Laurence Dunbar High School. The organization assumed control of both schools in 2009.
- Friends of Bedford is working with the school district to improve attendance, AYP, and graduation rates.
- Their model includes an emphasis on instruction, content delivery, and preparation for tests determining AYP.

Results

- At Paul Laurence Dunbar, **the percent of students scoring proficient on the reading portion of the DC-BAS test increased from 1.5% to 34.1% between October 2009 and March 2010.**
- **During that same time period, math scores increased from 4.4% to 20.2%.**
- Daily attendance increased by 8%.
- At Calvin Coolidge, the percent of students scoring proficient on the reading portion of the DC-BAS test increased from 15.6% to 50.5% between October 2009 and March 2010.
- During that same time period, math scores increased from 33.3% to 39.4%.
- Daily attendance increased by 9%.

Alignment with STG's turnaround principles:

- ✓ Accountability for student achievement
- ✓ Authority over key levers: Somewhat constrained by district and teacher union compliance
- ✓ Provider/coordinator of all services
- ✓ Embedded, consistent relationship

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Get involved

The School Turnaround Group is a division of Mass Insight Education, an independent non-profit that organizes public schools, higher education, business, and state government to significantly improve student achievement, with a focus on closing achievement gaps.

For more information on how your state can employ these promising practices for school turnaround, please contact the School Turnaround Group at:

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*The School Turnaround Groups **offers a broad range of strategic consulting services to state and district clients.** This work includes **building organizational capacity** through the development of state and district turnaround offices, **securing more flexible operating conditions**, including through the development of modified collective bargaining agreements; **attracting and supporting Lead Partners** through the development of Request for Proposal and Memorandum of Understanding tools; and **auditing state and district readiness** to implement dramatic turnaround strategies.*

In each of our engagements, we seek to deeply understand the needs of our client to offer highly customized solutions and to develop lasting relationships to support the difficult work of school turnaround over the necessarily long time frame.

The presentation and related documents are the result of a research and development process led by Mass Insight with the support of various partners.

It should be used in conjunction with the Main Report, “The Turnaround Challenge: Why America’s best opportunity to dramatically improve student achievement lies in our worst performing schools,” and a variety of other resources we have developed and distributed.

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